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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000276

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [SO](#) [QA](#)

SUBJECT: QATAR CLARIFIES POLICES AND ACTIONS ON SOMALIA;
DENIES INTENT TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE TFG AND OPPOSITION

REF: DOHA 238

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- MFA Minister of State Ahmed Al-Mahmoud convoked Ambassador April 27 to clarify Qatar's position on Shaykh Hassan Aweys.

-- He made the clarification in light of statements by members of a U.S. delegation to a Somalia donors conference in Brussels last week. According to Al-Mahmoud, the U.S. delegation contended that Qatar supported Shaykh Hassan Aweys' opposition to the Somali Government.

-- Al-Mahmoud said Qatar did not support Aweys; Qatar, in fact, was one of the first countries to support publicly Somalia's current President and the TFG.

-- Al-Mahmoud provided additional detail on the issue of Somalia at the recent Doha-hosted Arab League summit, and said Qatar had no intent, as far as he knew, to mediate in Somalia.

End Key Points.

1. (C) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud convoked Ambassador April 27 to clarify Qatar's stance towards Somali opposition elements led by Shaykh Hassan Aweys. Al-Mahmoud said U.S. assertions, reportedly during a breakfast meeting at a recent Brussels donor conference for Somalia, that Qatar supports Aweys through Eritrea are not true.

2. (C) In fact, the contrary is true: Qatar was one of the first countries, in addition to the United States, to give public support to new Somali President Shaykh Sherif Ahmed, he said.

3. (C) Qatar has been asked to mediate with Aweys, but Al-Mahmoud emphasized that the GOQ had not taken a decision yet whether to do that. If Qatar does decide to mediate, Qatar would probably mediate the dispute through Eritrean government channels, not directly with Aweys.

4. (C) Ambassador said he would convey the clarification to Washington. Ambassador confirmed that Al-Mahmoud was aware that Aweys was on the US "terrorist list" -- OFAC's Specially Designated Nations and Blocked Persons.

5. (C) Ambassador then asked Al-Mahmoud for clarification of

Qatar's policy on financial and material support to the Government of Somalia. Is it true, as some have diplomatic sources have told him, that the GOQ is conditioning any assistance on the TFG's reaching out to the opposition? Ambassador noted that talk of this condition circulated following the March Summit in Doha of the Arab League (AL). Questions arose as to whether Qatar attached conditions to the AL's support for Somalia speaking on behalf of Qatar itself or on behalf of the AL as its current president.

¶16. (C) Al-Mahmoud responded that Qatar attaches no conditions to its financial support for Somalia. He said Somalia has approached the Arab League with a request for budgetary support as an agenda item for the March Summit. When the Somali President met in closed session with heads of state to ask for budgetary support, no leader "spoke up and offered support."

¶17. (C) Later, Somalia withdrew its request for funding. The decision to condition Arab League support to the TFG on the TFG's outreach to the opposition, was not, Al-Mahmoud underscored, a Qatari decision; it was an AL decision. Stressing his personal involvement in and knowledge of these discussions, a visibly angry Al-Mahmoud said other AL members were behind the false allegations that Qatar was responsible for the decision taken at the Summit not to condition budgetary support to Somalia.

¶18. (C) The Ambassador asked if recent reports in the Qatari press indicating that the GOQ had been asked to mediate between the Government of Somalia and the Shabaab were true.

DOHA 00000276 002 OF 002

¶19. (C) Al-Mahmoud said this was the first he had heard of this and expressed surprise at these reports. Qatar is "hesitant to get involved" in mediation within Somalia since Saudi Arabia is already involved. To his knowledge, no one had asked the GOQ to mediate, with the exception of Somali nationals living in Canada who had sent the GOQ a letter of request.

¶10. (C) Ambassador asked Al-Mahmoud to let him know if Qatar does decide to become involved in Somalia mediation. Al-Mahmoud replied that he would.
LeBaron